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Suggestion 6

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? For thou hast made him but little lower than God" (Ps. 8:4, 5).

EXALTED LOWLINESS

- I. The majestic heavens.
- II. The mighty God.
- III. Exalted man. His power over nature; his moral insight; his quest of ideal ends; his immortal destiny.

Suggestion 7

"How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?" (Matt. 12:12.)

MARKET VALUES

Introduction. Need of a new scale of values.

- I. How men regard sheep.
- II. How men regard men.
- III. How God regards sheep and men.

Suggestion 8

"The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judg. 7:20).

A TWO-HANDED SWORD

- I. God and man worked together: there was one sword for both.
- II. Thus God's will was done through human means.
- III. Thus human hands were strengthened by divine aid.

Use as an illustration

"If my hand slacked
I should rob God . . .
He could not make Antonio Stradivari's
violins without Antonio."

THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSE IN A CANTONMENT

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There are many who are turning prophets as to what religion will be "when the boys come home." One cannot be far from the truth in the forecast that the religious life of the men in the camps will give us some intimation as to what these new interests in religion will be. In reading such descriptions it is necessary to allow for the constant temptation to generalize and homileticize interesting incidents. Dr. Stifler's discussion is particularly valuable in that, though brief, it avoids this danger.

One would be very rash to generalize about the religious reactions of the men of our National Army unless he had experience of many camps, for by comparison of experiences with others the writer found that there was a great

variety in this respect between camps drawing troops from different sections of the country.

At Camp Dodge, Iowa, the men were drafted from southern Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota. The

¹ Camp Religious Director for the Y.M.C.A. at Camp Dodge, September 1, 1917, to March 1, 1918.

majority of them, therefore, came from small towns and farming districts, and few from large cities—the twin cities being the only large municipalities in the entire draft area. The religious background of the men also plays a decisive part in the readiness and nature of their response. At this camp a fairly large proportion of the men were raised in the Roman Catholic church and about an equal proportion in the various branches of the Lutheran church. Of the evangelical denominations the Methodists considerably outnumbered the nearest denomination in numbers.

The first few weeks at camp proved the time when the men were most open to the religious appeal. At this time they were strange to their new life, apt to be homesick, and had not yet acquired the enthusiasm for the art of soldiering that was almost uniformly developed by the end of two months. The sympathy and friendliness of the religious workers was welcomed in those first days with pathetic eagerness. I sometimes thought that the hymns and the words of Scripture seemed to them to be a warm tie to remind them of the home and personal life that they had left.

The general effect of taking a young man out of civilian life and plunging him overnight into a great military camp was to give him a sort of anonymous feeling. He was depersonalized, and only gradually did he come to recover himself and find out that in spite of the great numbers of men each was still himself and that uniform clothes did not make uniform characters. During this depersonalized period it seemed to be a tremendous comfort to be in a place where a fellow human being treated him

as an individual and where he could listen to a religious message which reminded him that God cares for the individual.

It was at such a period that on one rainy evening I spoke in a tent to some twelve hundred men. It was dreary enough outside, and the ground inside was churned to a fine pastelike mud. The talk was plain and simple on the theme that the same God that was in their church at home was in this camp and was adequate to help them in their new life. About two hundred men raised their hands in token of desire to be remembered in that closing prayer, and about an equal number sought to have a personal word with the speaker and other workers afterward. Their main impulse seemed to be to have a personal word with one who had encouraged them, and some dozen or more wanted to register themselves definitely for a religious life.

After two months had passed the situation was quite different. The homesickness was all gone, the regret at having left their civilian life had given way to a fine determination to master the art of soldiering. They knew more about the issues of the war, and for the most part were filled with an uproarious patriotism. When I asked a hutful one night what they considered the best thing that camp life had brought to them, the reply was, first the drill and the discipline. They were filled with enthusiasm for their officers and the army and never responded so readily as to some suggestion that they would soon be overseas where they would make the Kaiser wiser.

On the surface one might think that the religious appeal at this stage would

not meet with so ready a response. It is true that meetings were not attended in such large numbers. Military duties would account for some of that, and many other causes would tend to keep them away. But it was my opinion that the real spiritual convictions of the men were clearer and had more expression in conduct than at first. Moreover, it is to be questioned whether most of them were not leading more regular and cleaner lives than when they were at home.

At this stage we began to form Bible classes which met sometimes on Sunday morning and sometimes on a week night in barracks, mess halls, or Y.M.C.A. buildings. It was in these smaller groups, where one came face to face with a few men, that one was able to judge best of the spiritual reactions that were going on. Of course, there were many men who shunned all classes and meetings, but as near as I could judge most men were in some sort of religious meeting every two or three weeks.

Those Bible classes were a priceless privilege to the leaders, for no matter what the lesson might be the questions invariably drifted around to the problem of adjusting Christianity and the business of war, which they now clearly understood to be killing Germans. I used to think that there came a noticeable change over every company after their first few lessons at bayonet practice. I knew of some few men who refused entirely to go to religious meetings because they felt that a man could not be a Christian and a soldier. I shall hereafter have far more confidence in the grip that the Ten Command-

ments have in their literal wording. More than one of these men said: "The Ten Commandments say 'Thou shalt not kill,' and my business now is to kill, and I mean to do it; so I can't keep the Commandments and be a soldier."

Knowing that I had to meet this frame of mind, and realizing that I did not have a chance to meet it logically, I collected every telling incident I could of the lives of godly soldiers, Henry Havelock, General Gordon, Stonewall Jackson, General O. O. Howard, and many others, and the fact of these men having met and surmounted what seemed to them so impossible never failed to make an impression.

There were some regiments of picked men to whom it was a joy to minister. To one such, one cold winter night, I preached precisely the same sermon that I had the winter previously presented to a university audience. The theme was that God is a reality, he is found by action and faith rather than abstract thinking. It was a dramatic hour—a hundred and fifty men grouped in a dimly-lighted barracks messroom. There was very little appeal to the emotions but much to the conscience and head of a sincere man. At the close of that service there were thirty men who signed the war roll cards.

With another regiment, made up mostly of well-educated men who were volunteers and came from all over the Middle West and the eastern cities, I had a similar experience. It was my uniform observation that there was a more vital response to a clear-cut presentation of the character of Christ and his ability to impart that character to others than to any other subject.

They were not interested in abstractions to any great extent. A friend who has worked among the Jackies at the Great Lakes station tells me that those boys asked him the most impossible theological questions. He showed me a list of ten such that he had taken down. They would perplex a theological faculty. I suspect that this is partially due to the fact that the Jackie averages around twenty years of age, while our draft men were nearer twenty-six.

The religious work in a cantonment is very different from that which is either possible or desirable in the camps overseas. In the cantonment men are

getting ready for a great strain. They are eager to meet it like men. The natural heroism of the soul is steadily stiffening to an entire readiness to make the great sacrifice, and as time goes on and the contest grows nearer, religion seems to come down to its simplest personal elements—a mighty belief in the God of right and justice, and a more or less confident faith that he who gave his own son to die that others might live will deal kindly with a man who knows that he is weak and wants spiritual strength to keep clean and fight bravely, and, if need be, die in hope of immortal life beyond.

RELIGION AND WAR

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Patriotism is indissolubly connected with war. Indeed, it is commonly most in evidence during times of war. Yet it is only a few years since war for America was a matter of hardly more than academic importance. We had peace societies, several of them heavily endowed, but their chief operation seemed rather dealing with anachronistic issues. We were altogether unmilitary as a nation, and as a nation the United States looked out upon war as something which might be expected in remote and backward regions like Africa, or in such turbulent and unmodern states as those which are to be found in the

Balkans. We had even come to believe the peristent assertion that the Kaiser was the guardian of the peace of Europe. Few Americans were interested in international affairs, and even our relation with the dangerous Morocco question was that of benevolent aloofness. Our hopes were centered around the Hague Conference, and we had come to feel that the ever-increasing intimacy and interdependence born of commerce and the growing co-operation in the field of science—in a word that the whole course of civilization could be trusted to make wars cease. Peace was discussed in the genial atmosphere of banquets, and